



Innovation

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Australia: the Mercure Hobart blazes new trails for travellers with disabilities

Upgrading hospitality for people with disabilities is the goal that the Mercure Hobart (Australia) has decided to set itself.

"We realised it was important to upgrade our services for people with disabilities – just like we're adapting to meet business travellers' requirements," say Mercure Hobart General Manager **Adrian Sampson** explains.

And the result is commendable: this Australian hotel has been busy introducing a plethora of new amenities and entering into new partnerships to treat travellers with disabilities to a new and friendlier travel experience.

This hotel has teamed up with three specialists: Royal Guide Dogs (the leading organisation for guide dogs for blind or partially blind people), Hearing Link and the Tasmanian Deaf Society (two companies that help deaf and hard-of-hearing people). These three partnerships shaped the hotel's equipment-related decisions, and trained staff to assist customers with disabilities more efficiently.



More and smarter amenities

This hotel has invested in several tools. It now has a video in sign language to welcome guests as soon as they step into the lobby. It also has vibrating pillowcases connected to alarm clocks in 8 rooms, and a telephone with a digital display and bespoke browsing features available for customers. But that's not all: this hotel has also fitted extra lighting into several of its rooms and produced audio versions of its welcome brochures.

The restaurant menu has been translated into Braille for visually-impaired customers – and audio versions of the menu are likewise available. And, last but not least, evacuation instructions and information on doors is also available in Braille.

"Disabilities mean more than difficulties moving around. It was important to make sure our hotel was perfectly suitable for deaf or blind people too," adds **Adrian Sampson**.

Those examples will no doubt inspire other hotels in Australia – and beyond.